

## OBITUARY

Edward Howard Wild, L.I. Biol. 1920–1992

Ted Wild, who died unexpectedly on 12th September 1992 at the age of 72 was well known to members of our Society and to moth hunters in general. His light-hearted contributions to the entomological journals including the recent "Mothmanship" series in the Record will be sadly missed as will his wit and fund of stories and anecdotes with which he entertained collecting companions.

Ted was born in Sheffield in 1920 but at the age of four moved to Croydon from where he spent many happy holidays on the Isle of Wight. Although he regarded himself as a Yorkshireman, especially where cricket was concerned, he retained a close affection for the island and its nature, retiring to Highcliffe in Dorset in 1981 from where he could see The Needles.

Ted attended Whitgift School and after college served in the army during the war years. While stationed in Somerset he was able to visit the Quantocks and spent much time collecting within the area.

He was demobbed in 1946 and entered the teaching profession, first at Lanfranc Secondary Modern School and then at Heath Clark Grammar School where he was head of the biology department until his retirement. He was not happy with the changing face of education which he regarded as an assault on standards and an affront to common sense and this contributed to his decision to retire early. That he could be an inspirational teacher is evidenced by the way in which a number of his pupils stayed in touch and have gone on to achieve much in the biological sciences.

In 1942 Ted married Marjorie Dyer, and they have two sons, Robin and Julian. Marjorie always supported Ted's collecting and especially in the early years of his retirement was a frequent companion in the field.

Ted collected keenly from early boyhood until 1952 when he became a student at the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man and devoted his energies to



Fig. 1. E. H. Wild, 1920–1992.

the study of Gurdjieff's philosophy, immersing himself in the exacting regime the "work" entailed, to the exclusion of entomology.

At the end of the sixties he left this group and although he continued to follow the principles he had learned there to the end of his life, he had no more to do formally with that organization.

He resumed collecting and threw himself wholeheartedly into the entomological scene, involving himself in our Society's affairs and serving as Field Meetings Secretary and as Secretary from 1978 to 1980. An innovation he introduced was field trips for night collecting, which now of course have become the staple diet of our calendar.

After his return to collecting Ted pursued micros as well as the larger moths and quickly built up an impressive collection, especially of tortricids and a thorough knowledge of these groups. Unfortunately failing eyesight after his first heart attack in 1984 meant that his activities in this direction were curtailed in his last years.

Ted kept detailed diaries which run from the age of fourteen to the end of his life and record the circumstances of each insect he took. In addition, for many years he kept detailed trap records recording every insect in the garden trap and much use of these records has been made in compilation of local lists for the Croydon area and lately Hampshire. He was always keen to point out that although Highcliffe is in Dorset it is also in the Hampshire vice county 11.

During much of his life Ted lived in Selsdon and his garden trap produced a great variety of moths, many of them "good" species, including a most varied selection of *Agrotis clavis* Hufn. and a *Hyles euphorbiae* L. as well as an extraordinary run of *Xanthorhoe fluctuata* ab. *costovata*.

There are many notable insects in his collection amongst which can be mentioned the type of *Ennomos erosaria* D. & S. ab. *cornugrisea* Wild, two *Coenonympha pamphilus* L. ab. *albescens* and two *Plebejus argus* L. ab. *pulla* from the New Forest. In 1951 in a visit to Ham Street woods described in an article for the *Entomologist's Gazette*, Ted was fortunate enough to find the first specimen for 30 years of the scarce dagger, *Acrionicta auricoma* D. & S.. He was tying his shoelace; the moth was just emerged and drying its wings. In the same year Ted found the first *Scopula nigropunctata* Hufn. taken at Ham Street.

When Ted retired to Highcliffe it was in the hope of getting migrants and he was well rewarded with amongst others *Diachrysis orichalcea* F., two *Chrysodeixis chalcites* Esp. and in 1985 a *Lymantria dispar* L. and *Lampides boeticus* L. which he caught in a tube while returning from having his hair cut. Shortly before his death several collectors visited him in search of *Udea fulvalis* Hübn. which had colonized his garden. In addition a *Pavonia pavonia* L. he took in the Quantocks and which was named by him ab. *flaviocellatus* Wild is in the R.C.K. collection.

Apart from butterflies and moths Ted was knowledgeable in many aspects of natural history and made an extensive collection of fossils from the Barton beds, Dorset and the Isle of Wight.

Ted did not by any means confine his interests to nature. Each day started with *The Times* crossword to be finished before breakfast! and he spent much of his retirement surrounded by books, devouring fiction from Tolkien to Kipling, or immersed in Egyptology, Eastern mysticism or the early history of the Church. He had superb concentration and could quote freely from what he had read, communicating his enthusiasm for certain books so that his friends' bookshelves grew to resemble Ted's. Painting was another hobby especially in his early years.

Ted contributed many notes and articles to the entomological journals of which those mentioned above are of special interest for their style as well as content. He wrote poems for himself, his family and friends, especially his granddaughter Rosie

and shortly before his death wrote a collection of short stories which combine entomology and mysticism, but which remains unpublished.

On a personal note I will miss Ted not only as a charming and enthusiastic collecting companion but as a teacher and confidant who could instantly see to the heart of matters with his third eye and make one consider afresh problems be they entomological, political or personal and see them from a different perspective. Our sympathy goes out to Marjorie and his sons.

A. J. PICKLES

## NEWS FROM DINTON PASTURES

With the completion of the Society's headquarters, the Pelham-Clinton Building, at Dinton Pastures in August 1992, the library and collections were installed during the Autumn. Members may now examine the collections and borrow books.

The rooms are usually open on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, but telephone 0734-321402 for a recording of exact opening times.

The 'official' opening is scheduled for Sunday 27 June 1993, with Professor Sir Richard Southwood F.R.S., performing the opening ceremony.



Wednesday 2 September 1992, the installation of the library at Dinton Pastures. Standing, from left to right: S. R. Miles (Librarian), P. J. Chandler (Curator), B. R. Baker, W. Parker, F. M. Murphy, R. W. J. Uffen. Seated: R. A. Jones. Photo: J. Muggleton.